update

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news & events

Manila. UNDP is playing a key role in relief and rehabilitation efforts following the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo on the Philippine island of Luzon. The eruption, which began on 14 June, was the most severe in terms of human impact since the 1883 Krakatau explosion in Indonesia. The volcano remained active for several weeks, spreading ash and debris over an area 40 kilometres in radius. Over 300 people were killed and 200,000 had to be evacuated. Damage is estimated at over US$200 million.

Several UN agencies are involved in the relief operation, as well as bilateral donors and numerous non-governmental organizations. The task of co-ordinating the UN relief effort is being carried out by the UNDP Resident Representative in Manila, Kevin McGrath, in his capacity as UN Resident Co-ordinator and representative of the UN Office of the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator.

UNDP itself has already given $50,000 from Special Programme Resources (SPR), mainly to supply tents to evacuees. Further funding of up to $500,000 from SPR has been earmarked for technical assistance in the long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction programme.

Tirana. A new UNDP field office was inaugurated here on 13 August by UNDP Administrator William H. Draper III in the presence of the Prime Minister of Albania, Ylli Bufi. The ceremony was followed by a reception in the new UNDP premises, hosted by the newly appointed Resident Representative, Jean-Nicolas Marchal, formerly Resident Representative in Mauritius. The opening of the office marks an important step in Albania's policy of increasing openness to the outside world, and brings the total number of UNDP field offices to 114.

Mr. Draper's two-day visit to the Albanian capital also included meetings with the President, Ramiz Alia and senior members of the government. In addition, Mr. Draper held a press conference and was interviewed for Albanian television and radio.

Although the field office is new, UNDP has been providing technical assistance to Albania for over 15 years, ranging from computer technology to wine-making, and was the first multilateral agency to operate in the country. During the past year the emphasis has been on helping the country in its transition to a market economy.

Most of the assistance is being provided under UNDP's Management Development Programme. Experts funded by UNDP are organizing training courses for university professors of economics, and are helping the government re-formulate its economic programme. Three top ministers in the present government participated, prior to their appointments, in a seminar for senior East European politicians organized by UNDP, the World Bank and the Economic Development Institute. In addition, a team fielded by UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), has carried out an in-depth agricultural survey in Albania.

Under UNDP's leadership, a UN inter-agency needs assessment mission visited Albania in June. A donor consultation meeting, to respond to the mission's recommendations, is due to be held in Brussels in September. UNDP hopes to continue to play a catalytic role in Albania's development.

New York. The volume of global press coverage of UNDP's *Human Development Report 1991*, up to early July, was over 47 per cent higher than for last year's report. Radio and television coverage were also increased. The main policy messages of the report were picked up by media all over the world and in international development dialogue.

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An indication of the report's impact is its mention in a communique of the London Economic Summit meeting of the Group of Seven in July, chaired by Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom. The communique states: "We note with favour the recent report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the recent decisions by several donor countries to take account of military expenditure where it is disproportionate when setting up aid programmes and encourage all other donor countries to take similar action."

Ulaanbaatar. A meeting organized by UNDP was held here in July to plan a new and wide-ranging sub-regional programme of technical co-operation in North-East Asia in the period 1992-1996. The four participating countries were the Mongolian People's Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea. Those attending from the host country included J. Batsuur, Minister of National Development. Also attending were the UNDP Resident Representatives from all four countries. The meeting was chaired by Herbert Behrstock, chief of the East Asia and Pacific Division of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

In preparation for the meeting, UNDP Resident Representatives questioned the governments concerned about their development needs. In addition, small government/UNDP teams toured the sub-region, and two consultants conducted assessment missions in the four countries.

Participants at the meeting focussed on four priority areas for future co-operation. Highest priority was given to the promotion of trade and investment in the Tuman river basin, on the border between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The other priority areas were: coal utilization and atmospheric pollution control; expansion of temperate zone food crops; and the development of new and renewable energy sources.

The participating countries agreed that a minimum of $10 million would be required from core funds to launch the proposed programme. However, to implement the programme fully, a further $40 million should be sought from bilateral and multilateral sources.

The meeting also reviewed preliminary proposals for a wider technical co-operation programme embracing the whole Asia and Pacific region. Themes highlighted in the programme included agriculture, resource management, development of clean energy, treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and improved access to water and sanitation.

New York. Professor Muhammad Yunus, founder and managing director of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, visited New York early this month at the invitation of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), which is collaborating with the Bank on a major rural development scheme, and UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific also took the opportunity of Professor Yunus's visit to co-sponsor a lecture on the Bank's policies and style of management.

The Grameen (meaning "rural") Bank was started by Professor Yunus in 1976, providing small loans to help villagers use their skills for income-generating activities. It was officially registered as a bank in 1983. Helped by financial support from multilateral and bilateral agencies, it grew rapidly and now has 886 branches in Bangladesh and nearly one million borrowers, of whom 91 per cent are women. Loans averaging $75 are extended for a period of one year, and over 98 per cent are repaid on schedule, although no collateral is required.

The bank has now been replicated in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. UNIFEM and UNCDF both provide sponsorship for trainees from developing countries to go to Bangladesh and learn about the Grameen system. Canada, France and the US have also begun to apply the methods of the Grameen Bank to assist the unemployed in becoming income-generators.

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Benin. In an effort to improve performance in the agricultural

sector, the Government of Benin is currently restructuring its agricultural institutions, including the Ministry of Rural Development and Co-operative Action (MDRAC) and its six regional centres. In particular, the agricultural extension system is being modernized and upgraded in the light of recent developments, such as the move towards economic liberalization and encouragement of private initiatives. UNDP will assist in this upgrading by designing a new extension system, training national personnel in its use and assisting in its practical application. Proposed UNDP budget: $1,052,645 for an agronomist, consultants, two UN Volunteers (UNVs), subcontracts and equipment. Executed by FAO and implemented by MDRAC. (BEN/87/011)

Oman. To help the government promote greater energy self-sufficiency from non-petroleum sources, UNDP will assist the Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals in effectively exploiting the Al Kamil coal field. The project will help plan future coal mining and the use of coal for power generation in an environmentally sensitive way. Funds of $1,106,000 from government cost-sharing are to pay for consultants, training, study tours and equipment. Executed by the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UN/DTCD) and implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals. (OMA/90/010)

United Arab Emirates. Assistance from UNDP is part of a national effort to develop programmes for early intervention to help children who are impaired or at risk of disablement. A pilot centre will be set up in the Sharjah Emirate, offering a programme of disability prevention and rehabilitation. This will include counselling parents of disabled children. In addition, courses on the methods used at the centre will be provided for trainees from the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the region. Proposed UNDP contribution: $250,000. Government cost-sharing: $1,250,000. Funds are to pay for experts, training and educational aids and equipment. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services (UNDP/OPS) and implemented by the Emirate of Sharjah. (UAE/91/001)

10 July 1991

Bolivia. Micro-enterprises employ 62 per cent of Bolivia's economically active population, and are increasingly recognized as a vital and dynamic part of the economy. Under this project, UNCDF will assist the Foundation for Micro-enterprise Development (PRODEM). A non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 1986, PRODEM has to date provided financial services, including loans and savings facilities, to 34,000 micro-enterprises in the major cities of La Paz, El Alto, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba. The project will help PRODEM replicate its programme in the city of Oruro and expand its activities in El Alto. Revolving credit funds will be set up by UNCDF through PRODEM in both cities. The project will also set up an appropriate management information system for PRODEM's savings programme. Proposed UNCDF contribution: $2,263,310 for a subcontract to PRODEM, training, computers and office equipment. Proposed PRODEM contribution: $45,472 to pay for staff salaries and office rent in El Alto. Executed by PRODEM and implemented by the Ministry of Planning and Co-ordination. (BOL/90/C01)

Burundi. In 1989-1990 UNDP extended emergency assistance to the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences (FEAS) of the University of Burundi, which had suffered severely from withdrawal of bilateral technical aid. The present project, which represents a second phase of the assistance, aims to ensure the academic self-reliance of the FEAS by recruiting and training Burundi nationals for teaching positions. Other objectives of the project include improving the quality of administration and teaching, reducing the failure rate among students, and upgrading the faculty's research centre. Proposed UNDP contribution: $3,537,315 for a subcontract for seven professors in economics, researchers, training and educational supplies. Executed by UNDP/OPS and implemented by the University of Burundi. (BDI/90/006)

Tanzania. As part of a government drive to increase food production, a new outreach programme for small farmers will be developed with UNDP assistance on the island of

Zanzibar, whose economy is based largely on subsistence agriculture. An important part of the project strategy is to involve the farmers themselves as much as possible in the design of the extension programme. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1.5 million for agricultural extension and training specialists, a UNV, study tours, training and equipment. Executed by FAO and implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Natural Resources. (URT/89/019)

Uganda. The 15 years of civil unrest that began in 1971 critically weakened management capacity in Uganda. UNDP's Management Development Programme will assist the Uganda Institute of Management (UIM) in building a national management training capacity. Objectives include co-ordinating management training and consultancy services throughout the country, setting and monitoring educational standards, and providing training not readily available in Uganda. Although the system will be used by both the private and the public sector, it is intended that the UIM will become a self-financing body, independent of the government. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1.44 million for management consultants and workshops. Executed by UNDP/OPS and implemented by UIM. (UGA/90/001-UGA/91/501)

Regional project:

Asia and the Pacific. The Asia and Pacific Development Centre (APDC) is an inter-governmental organization of 19 member countries, which has been receiving UNDP support since its inception in the early 1980s. It is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. UNDP will continue to support APDF in the period 1991-1993. UNDP-supported activities will focus on six areas: expanding rural credit facilities, collecting data on extension services for women, formulating a strategy for local resource management, creating a research and reference service, enhancing APDF's public management training programme, and establishing an energy planning network. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,851,700 advisory services, APDC co-ordinators and research assistants, missions, training materials and computer supplies and reporting costs. Executed by APDC and implemented by participating government ministries. (RAS/89/043)

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news & events

Santiago. Millions of people in Latin America and the Caribbean have become increasingly vulnerable to the privations of poverty. Cuts in government support programmes have followed the region's economic downslide. The crisis calls for a new development strategy for the region, according to participants at a conference on poverty alleviation and social development, held here on 29-30 July. The conference is one of a series organized by UNDP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean which focus on priorities identified by heads of states in Caracas last year.

The conference here emphasised that in a global economic system driven by rapid technolocical change, governments in the region need to invest in a skilled labour force. Existing economic policies that benefit only a small, affluent minority led to the region's economic crisis. Over the last decade, Latin America and the Caribbean have accounted for a shrinking share of world GNP but an increasing percentage of world population.

These factors make it imperative that the region adopt a pattern of development that would tie economic growth to social development, participants noted. The conference was attended by economists, and representatives from non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and other international institutions.

New York. The Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility is to be administered by UNDP's Division for Non-Governmental Organizations, according to a recent decision taken by the Facility's partners — the World Bank, the UN Environment Programme and UNDP.

The programme will support non-governmental and community initiatives that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect biodiversity, limit pollution of international waters and reduce damage to the ozone layer.

Local groups are often able to identify specific solutions to these problems, said Jane Jacqz, senior advisor of the NGO division. Potential solutions range from combatting deforestation to encouraging income-generating activities that reduce the community's tendency to ravage the environment.

In its first three years the programme will study these small-scale projects to see if they can usefully be reproduced on a larger scale.

With an initial funding level of US$5 million, the Small Grants Programme will make awards of up to $50,000 for community and national projects, and up to $250,000 for regional or interregional initiatives. The NGO Division will draft guidelines for the programme and monitor projects through UNDP field offices.

Bellagio. Parasitic worms retard growth and learning in millions of children worldwide. These crippling infections have long been resistant to control, but at a meeting held here on 12-16 August, participants emphasized the extraordinary pharmacological advances that now make low-cost control virtually certain. The promise of new broad-spectrum drugs was the main topic of discussion in the gathering, jointly organized by UNDP and the Rockefeller Foundation.

The new drugs control the entire range of helminth infections, including tape worms, filarial diseases, and schistosomiases. In all, 19 of the 23 major human worm infections can be treated with three drugs — albendazole, praziquantel and ivermectin.

The drugs are also suited for mass chemotherapy programmes. The epidemiology of worm infection allows infected children to be treated just once every year. The new drugs do not require individual diagnostic testing before use. Nor do they require cold storage, a factor that has plagued international efforts to increase levels of child immunization.

"This initiative can be seen as the next phase of child survival — how to promote the well being of children that have been saved," said Timothy S. Rothermel, director of UNDP's Division for Global and Interregional Programmes.

Following the meeting, the Rockefeller Foundation, UNDP and UNICEF have decided to test whether school-based programmes could be used to distribute these drugs to young children. "The simplicity of therapy, high rates of infection in school children and infrequent dosing intervals suggest the feasibility of providing treatment in schools," said Mr. Rothermel.

Operational research programmes are planned in four to five countries to deliver these drugs to over 100,000 school-children each.

Mogadishu. The UNDP office in Somalia was reopened here by UNDP Resident Representative Osman Hashim on 15th August, over seven months after civil strife forced the evacuation of international UN staff.

"We are happy to be here to declare officially the reestablishment of the UN in Mogadishu," said Mr. Hashim. He said a special note of thanks was due for the many National Officers who maintained the UN presence with "courage, patience and dedication."

Several UN missions have toured Somalia in the past few months. A report by the Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission is currently with UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and will form the basis for an appeal for humanitarian assistance for the Horn of Africa countries.

Mr. Hashim is also UN Special Coordinator for Emergency Relief Operations in Somalia.

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Sri Lanka. The Janasaviya Trust Fund has been set up by the Government to develop new systems and institutional arrangements that could improve the living conditions of the rural poor. Developed in collaboration with UNDP and the World Bank, the Trust is directed at reorienting welfare programmes toward productive, self-help initiatives. The Trust will provide technical and financial assistance to government agencies and NGOs involved in credit, infrastructure development, employment skills and nutrition. UNDP will provide the necessary technical assistance and will train staff at the Trust to coordinate complex field programmes. Proposed UNDP contribution: $2,446,192 for experts, UN Volunteers (UNVs), training and equipment. The World Bank is executing the project for the first two years, thereafter it will be carried out by the government. Implemented by the Janasaviya Trust Fund through the Ministry of Policy, Planning and Implementation. (SRL/91/005)

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Angola. UNDP is assisting Angola in its transition from a centrally-planned to market-oriented economy. UNDP has supported the Ministry of Planning since 1990 in formulating macro-economic policies suited to the government's economic recovery programme. This has largely been realized by now. The follow-up phase will concentrate on developing sectoral and regional strategies, assist in aid management and co-ordination, and help in the finalization of the country's economic recovery programme. A training course in macro-economics and statistics will be offered to twenty mid- and senior-level officials beginning in September. Proposed UNDP contribution: $1,320,820 for macro-economists, public investments and aid co-ordination experts and training. Executed by the UN Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UN/DTCD) and implemented by the Ministry of Planning. (ANG/89/018)

Bangladesh. Despite fertile land and abundant water resources, food grains comprise one-fourth of Bangladesh's total imports. In order to create a winter cropping cycle, the government and donor community have invested heavily in irrigated agriculture. Since the 1960s much of this investment has gone to deep tube wells, and approximately 28,000 units have been installed. But because of organizational and co-ordination problems, the bulk of these are in disrepair, and the government has moved to sell these to private enterprises. The Grameen Bank, a prominent non-governmental organization, has purchased some wells and plans to buy more. Capital assistance will be given by the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to the Bank's subsidiary, the Grameen Agricultural Foundation, to purchase an additional 500 deep tube wells in the Rangpur Dinajpur area in the next five years and to run these as financially self-sustaining enterprises. The Foundation will provide water, fertilizers and seed to local farmers in return for a share of their crops. This project will spur agricultural production, rural incomes and employment, and improve water management practices. It is expected that participating farmers will double net incomes within six years. Landless farmers in the area will have an option to buy wells or operate these once the wells become profitable. Proposed UNCDF contribution: $6,507,000. Third-party cost-sharing from the Netherlands government: $7,336,000. Funds are to pay for missions, subcontracts, equipment and support costs. Executed by the government and implemented by the Grameen Agricultural Foundation/Ministry of Finance. (BGD/90/C01)

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Burundi. The government has accorded top priority to strengthening planning and economic management. The National Development Bank of Burundi is particularly important to this effort because of the large increase in its volume of business since 1985. The Bank has not yet improved its administrative structure and information processing system, and this has slowed down operations and delayed the recovery on loans. UNDP assistance is aimed at reducing the time needed to process loan requests, improving the recovery of loans and ensuring a greater return to capital. A key element of UNDP assistance is to computerize bank operations. Proposed UNDP contribution: $992,750 for computer specialists, equipment and training. Executed by UNDP's Office for Project Services (UNDP/OPS) and implemented by the National Development Bank of Burundi. (BDI/89/020)

Colombia. UNDP has been supporting the government's programme of modernization and reform, in particular, the streamlining of public administration. Decentralization is to affect such crucial sectors as ports, railroads, air and maritime transport, agricultural marketing, health services, telecommunications and public utilities. UNDP will assist the government in the difficult task of redefining the relation between these institutions and the government. Following this, these institutions will be strengthened to promote efficiency in economic management and in the delivery of public services. Training and guidance in devising administrative reforms and legislation will be provided for the central government and local institutions. The Government contribution of $9,756,000 is being financed by the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank. Funds are to pay for experts, subcontracts for provision of specialized services in such areas as ports, maritime, railroads and air transportation, and equipment for information systems and computers. Government-executed and implemented by the National Planning Department. (COL/91/012)

Haiti. Responding to the recommendations of a recent study that highlights the critical depletion of the country's energy resources, the government has decided to install hydropower plants throughout the country. Fuel for thermal plants is already the country's single largest import and the largest item in the national budget. UNCDF is supporting this effort with funds to build a micro-hydroelectric plant at Saut-d'Eau in Villa Bonheur. The plant will have an installed capacity of 100 kw., and will be fed year-round by the St. Phard spring. Proposed UNCDF contribution: $894,000 for subcontracts on design and civil works, electro-mechanical equipment and construction costs. Executed by UNDP/OPS and implemented by the National Electricity Company of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communication. (HAI/91/C02)

Democratic People's Republic of Korea. UNDP will help strengthen management practices in major industries, particularly those linked to international trade. This is a priority today in DPRK with the growing recognition that key industries are not competitive in the international market. This project will introduce modern management techniques through UNDP's Management Development Programme. The aim is to improve management skills for state officials and managers in such areas as international trading, banking, insurance, marketing, investments, legislation and development of export products. Key components of the project include upgrading the University of National Economy and to establish management analysis groups at major industrial concerns and business training centers. Proposed UNDP contribution: $2,201,000 for consultants, study tours, fellowships, feasibility studies, training and equipment. Government executed and implemented by the General Bureau for Co-operation with International Organizations. (DRK/91/506)

Pakistan. Overgrazing has seriously depleted vegetation cover in Pakistan's largest province of Balochistan. This has had serious repercussions on livestock productivity and the living standard of people in the area. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and UNDP are to assist the provincial government with an integrated strategy that addresses these concerns. Support will be provided to government agencies to manage rehabilitation of rangelands and watersheds and to increase fodder production. The project is aimed at stimulating community participation. The World Food Programme will support the infrastructural work for restoring watersheds and stabilizing sand dunes. Proposed UNDP contribution: $5,770,910 for experts, training and equipment. Executed by FAO and implemented by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Balochistan Forest and Livestock

Departments. (PAK/88/050, PAK/88/051 and PAK/88/071)

Pakistan. The overall goal of this project is to improve the quality of life of low-income families, especially women in rural and urban slums. The project will initially be limited to the Provinces of Balochistan and Punjab. The focus here is on encouraging the development of community groups, identifying local needs and providing training in basic technical skills and resources to set up small businesses. UNVs are to play a central role in this effort, along with local NGOs and district councils. The results of this pilot project will be used to draw up a national community-based development plan. Proposed UNDP contribution: $3,218,200 for UNVs, provincial co-ordinators, management specialists, training and equipment. Executed by UNV and implemented by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Women Development. (PAK/90/022)

Panama. The country's health and education sectors are increasingly crippled by the inability to use available funds and by poor maintenance of existing infrastructure. The government has urgently sought UNDP's assistance for accelerating investments in the building and upkeep of physical stock in these sectors. This project will build upon earlier efforts to strengthen the Ministries of Health and Education. Sixty-five public school buildings and 35 health centres and hospitals are to be rehabilitated. The project will simultaneously help create a management structure for Panama's investment programmes in basic infrastructure in these sectors. Funds of $7,264,494 from government cost-sharing are to pay for subcontracts and equipment. Government-executed and implemented by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy in co-ordination with the Ministries of Health and Education. (PAN/91/008)

Saudi Arabia. Improving the country's road transport system remains a top development priority with the continued high rate of economic growth. In this second phase, the project will help upgrade the Ministry of Communications and its various departments in the areas of transport planning and management. Advisory services will be provided for the Transport Training Centre, primarily in formulating policies and plans for management training and research in road and highway design, construction and maintenance. Assistance also includes establishing a computerized management information system on road transport. Funds of $7,982,315 from government cost-sharing are to pay for traffic planners and engineers, UNVs, computer equipment and training. Executed by the UN/DTCD and implemented by the Ministry of Communications. (SAU/89/002)

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